

IMPROVING IRAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANIZATION CAPACITY IN THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF NATIONAL CULTURAL PATRIMONY

Cultural Heritage

Stand alone initiative

Task Manager: Rosanna Nitti

Year of ITFCSD grant approval: 2004

Status: active

Grant amount: USD 300,000

Disbursements: USD 7,091.97

Commitments: USD 41,152

Following the assessment “Iran’s Cultural Heritage and Social and Economic Development - *Prospects and Challenges*”, completed with the support of a first ITFCSD grant, a second grant has been approved to further the assistance to the Iranian Government in the cultural sector. On the basis of the recommendations proposed in the mentioned study, the Bank and the Iranian authorities agreed on the possibility to establish a Fund to promote the social and economic exploitation of cultural assets (Cultural Heritage Fund). Meanwhile, the Government of Iran invited the World Bank to support the reconstruction of the city of Bam that was devastated by a powerful earthquake on December 26, 2003.

In response to this request, the World Bank is preparing a lending operation, Bam Earthquake Emergency Recovery Project (BEERP), which will provide technical and financial assistance to address multiple recovery needs. Since these needs encompass the recovery of Bam’s cultural heritage, the Iranian Government has agreed to incorporate the cultural heritage activities in the BEERP. A first mission to Iran, carried out in April – May 2004 and joined by a team of international and national consultants recruited by the Bank with the support of the ITFCSD has led to the identification of: a) the objectives, nature and scope of the planned World Bank’s assistance to the recovery of Bam’s cultural heritage within the BEERP; b) the implementation of the related investment activities; and c) the steps required to complete the preparation of the assistance program. In addition to the analysis already delivered by the World Bank’s team of consultants, the ITFCSD is funding additional and specific assessments on the cost of implementing consolidation works for Arg-e-Bam, notably its inner walls (citadel) and samples of its external walls. Arg-e-Bam, the most significant monument of the Bam area, constitutes the world’s largest earthen architectural complex, and represents an architectural symbol for the province of Kerman and the entire Iran. Their results should be available by the end of May 2004 and will be reflected in the cost estimates of the assistance program.